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UNCLAS KATHMANDU 001105

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SUBJECT: MAOISTS KILL NGO WORKER; MORE WFP SUSPENSIONS

REF: KATHMANDU 871

INGO Staffer Tortured and Killed by Maoists

[1](#)1. (SBU) The Plan International (PI) representative for western Nepal's Bajhang district, a Nepalese national, was tortured and killed by Maoist rebels May 31, the organization's country director confirmed. Two other men were also killed in related incidents, according to June 3 press reports. PI had recently decided to evacuate its staff from Bajhang district due to deteriorating conditions. About two months ago Maoists looted the Bajhang district office and subsequently PI began to phase out operations there. Staff had first been sent to the district headquarters, and later on to Nepalgunj, western Nepal's largest city. The district representative had been the last employee remaining in Bajhang, and had planned to evacuate soon.

Maoists Suspect Informer

[1](#)2. (SBU) The head of the Nepal Police confirmed the deaths of the three men, adding that the Maoists suspected them of being police informants. Security forces had caught up with eight insurgents the day before the killings, the IGP noted.

Pattern Had Been Not to Harm Staff

[1](#)3. (SBU) Maoists had previously raided Plan International offices in several areas of Nepal, but always took care not to harm staff, the PI country director related. The pattern has been that the Maoists come in, burn documents and files, confiscate furnishings and plunder equipment. Staff members are given a lecture and then told to leave the area and not to return.

WFP Suspends Work in Two More Districts

[1](#)4. (U) The World Food Program (WFP) announced May 24 that it would suspend deliveries to a "food-for-work" program targeted at former bonded laborers in two western Nepal districts, Kailali and Bardiya, bordering India. The suspension came after Maoists looted 29.5 metric tons of rice from a warehouse in Bardiya district May 17. It follows the April 24 suspension of a joint German-WFP program in two districts in northwestern Nepal (Reftel). WFP has announced a "zero-tolerance" policy in response to the repeated looting of its stocks. The deputy head of a U.S.-based NGO who recently visited Kailali and Bardiya estimated that in the absence of the WFP's food-for-work program, its beneficiaries would run out of food in a few months.

Comment

[1](#)5. (SBU) Judging from accounts of these and previous raids on NGO offices, the insurgents are still not specifically targeting aid workers. The PI country director agreed that their district representative was not attacked as an aid worker per se, but rather for allegedly acting as an individual informant. Even so, his affiliation with an international NGO did not protect him. The looting of WFP warehouses seems to have been similarly opportunistic. These events have made aid agencies increasingly concerned about the safety of their projects and personnel, especially in western Nepal.

MALINOWSKI